

Military Traffic Management Command Supports DOD

Lieutenant Colonel John R. Randt, Army National Guard, Retired

WORLDWIDE, US MILITARY units perform missions while overcoming numerous challenges. The Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) gets US soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines the equipment they need—from tanks to toothpaste—to accomplish their vital missions. The command moves more than one million measurement tons of cargo a month for contingency, training and humanitarian purposes.¹ The critical cargoes MTMC transporters move worldwide set the time and place for mission successes.

Kosovo. Like other unexpected conflicts, war in the former Republic of Yugoslavia erupted at the wrong time in the wrong place. The United States wanted to move fast to support NATO peacekeeping goals in Kosovo, Serbia. Shrouded by mountainous terrain, Kosovo lacked sufficient highways, railroads and nearby ports. After studying the region, MTMC's acting operations officer remarked, "This has got to be one of the hardest places to get to in the world." But when the NATO air campaign began 24 March 1999, MTMC rushed into action.²

The first goal was to support US forces at the airfield in Tirana, Albania. Rain turned the pastures surrounding the airfield into mud. A US Army Apache battalion was ordered to the airfield from Germany, and engineers with MTMC's Transportation Engineering Agency took the lead in preparing for the aircraft's arrival. They quickly performed port studies at maritime ports throughout the region. At once, MTMC began supporting the growing US Army presence in Tirana.

The 598th Transportation Group established a water link to the main supply route from Brindisi, Italy, to Durres, Albania. The Air Mobility Command was doing the same with an air bridge directly to the airfield—as weather and airfield constraints allowed. Meanwhile, the US Navy's Military Sealift Command leased Italian ferryboats to carry vehicles

and freight across the Adriatic Sea. Most of the freight and vehicles arrived by train from Germany and were quickly directed across the water to the US base in Tirana.

As the 11-week air campaign continued, MTMC's significance increased. The largest vessel ever to visit Durres, the mine hunter USS *Osprey* came into the port on 1 May with high-priority cargo.³ The *ZERLiPOPULLI*, Tirana's daily newspaper of the ruling socialist party, called the record-size vessel an "American *Titanic*."⁴ MTMC soldiers and civilians unloaded the vessel's equipment and cargo without incident. The equipment and cargo were quickly moved up the winding roads into Albania.

A *ZERLiPOPULLI* reporter complimented a small group of unidentified US forces assisting the port operation: "The Americans are workers. Yesterday, at 2:30 p.m., six American military (including one woman) came into the port of Durres, dead tired, with dirt-covered uniforms. It seems that they were on some kind of reconnaissance mission in Durres. Looking at them, the message is very clear. You get rich by working. The Army comes with a civilian work message."⁵ That reporter's comment is a credit to DOD military and civilian employees worldwide.

If a US invasion had been required, it would have been launched across the Albanian border into Kosovo. The Brindisi-to-Durres sea lane would have been the heart of the main supply route. When the NATO air campaign ended after 11 weeks, MTMC moved into high gear. For quite some time, transportation planners had their eyes on the Greek port of Thessaloniki in the northern Aegean Sea because it boasted a modern port infrastructure and was the largest port in Greece.

If the port could be used, US Army 1st Infantry Division (1ID) combat vehicles could flow out of the US Navy's large medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships by the hundreds. From the port's huge

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Pier 6, the vehicles could move up the highways of northern Greece, go through Macedonia and pour into the US peacekeeping sector in southeast Kosovo.

Meanwhile, contract airlines ferried IID soldiers to Skopje, Macedonia, to link up with their vehicles. Behind the scenes of a world drama, MTMC transporters from the nearby 953d Transportation Company, Piraeus, Greece, rushed to Thessaloniki. Months earlier, the 598th Transportation Group commander had contracted for modular building construction to house the Worldwide Port System computers. This automation system tracked cargo movements of combat vehicles, trucks and shipping containers that supported the task force.

In Kosovo, civil authority evaporated with the retreat of Yugoslavian army troops. NATO commander General Wesley Clark urged nations that had promised peacekeeping troops to speed up their arrival.

In Bremerhaven, Germany, the 950th Transportation Company loaded the US Navy Ship (USNS) *Bob Hope*. On its maiden voyage, the *Bob Hope* was the first of three ships carrying IID combat vehicles. Once the *Bob Hope* was loaded, MTMC transporters loaded the USNS *Soderman*. As Army equipment continued to arrive in Bremerhaven, *Bob Hope* sailed, moving at flank speed of 24 knots and reaching Thessaloniki in six days. MTMC's transporters were ready and attended to last-minute details. Soldiers and civilians with the 29th Support Group, Kaiserslautern, Germany, provided an organizational hub for transporters. Two days later, the *Soderman* sailed for Thessaloniki.

Midday on 29 June MTMC transporters were told to offload a high-priority Army engineer unit from the small Italian coastal vessel *Gulfo di Fiori* before the *Bob Hope* arrived at the sea buoy outside the port of Thessaloniki at 0600 the next day. While the *Gulfo di Fiori* was in port, other ships loading and unloading blocked Pier 6. Late afternoon turned into early evening, then dusk. At last the *Gulfo di Fiori* moved dockside.

Heavy construction vehicles rolled through the ship's open bow and onto the dock. Having drained

the sodden cow pastures at the Tirana airport, soldiers of the 535th Engineer Company, Grafenwoehr, Germany, now arrived to meet new challenges in Kosovo. It was after midnight when the unit cleared the dock, allowing MTMC transporters only a brief rest before the *Bob Hope* arrived in six hours.

In all, MTMC delivered three shiploads of combat equipment to support the 7,000 Army peacekeeping troops in Kosovo as part of Operation *Joint Guardian*. Beginning on 30 June, MTMC directed the unloading of 274,000 square feet of cargo—1,345 pieces of Army equipment, including scores of M1A2 Abrams tanks and M2 Bradley fighting vehicles. Unloading continued until 1 July, and after a day's rest, MTMC transporters unloaded *Soderman's* 225,000 square feet of cargo.

Several weeks later, the USS *Osprey* arrived carrying Army equipment from Fort Lewis, Washington; Fort Riley, Kansas; and Fort Drum, New York. MTMC's 596th Transportation Group had loaded the ship earlier in Beaumont, Texas. The equipment was soon on the road to the IID in Kosovo. The work of MTMC soldiers and civilians in planning, managing, directing and preparing to move hundreds of pieces of cargo—some arriving unannounced at dockside in the final hours of loading—set the time and place for MTMC's mission success that helped synchronize process, automation and intellect to provide US forces with tactical vehicles and a steady stream of supplies.

Traffic management. Among its many missions, the MTMC directs, controls and supervises worldwide procurement and use of freight, personal property and passenger transportation services. It directly manages or influences transportation expenditures and related contracts of \$2.7 billion a year. MTMC success comes largely from its many industry partners who supply trucks, trains, ships, barges and other transportation modes. MTMC commander Major General Kenneth L. Privratsky stated, "We move almost one million measurement tons of cargo a month through MTMC ports—that is impressive. Just think about that amount of cargo. The longer I am here the more I am impressed by MTMC movements."⁶ If these measurement tons were placed

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adjacent to each other, they would stretch from the Naval Weapons Station at Key West, Florida, to Seattle, Washington, and back—and still extend 20 miles into the ocean.

The US Transportation Command's Army component, MTMC is one of the smallest of the Army's 15 major commands. Its authorized strength of 2,700 military and civilian employees maintains a presence at 24 terminals worldwide. MTMC manages and directs through three subordinate headquarters: the Deployment Support Command, Fort Eustis, Virginia; the 598th Transportation Group, Rotterdam, the Netherlands; and the 599th Transportation Group, Wheeler Army Air Field, Hawaii.

The command has water ports in such geographically diverse locations as Okinawa, Japan; Beaumont, Texas; Bremerhaven, Germany; and Izmir, Turkey. Each port has a deployment support team that can move to any port in the world for contingency operations. MTMC has an additional subordinate command, the Transportation Engineering Agency (TEA), Newport News, Virginia, whose civil engineers and operations analysts provide analysis, modeling and simulation support. Recent MTMC actions have increased the TEA's profile, and the agency is now more involved in planning than in the past. It is the command's lead for movement issues involved in the current Army transition.

MTMC continually performs a wide range of worldwide missions. When disorder broke out in Dili, East Timor, in 1999, MTMC supported peacekeeping troops by carrying equipment from Thailand and Jordan. In related missions, MTMC directed movement of the US Army 11th Signal Brigade's equipment from Fort Huachuca, Arizona, to Darwin, Australia. More recently, for the 12th time in two years, military and civilian transporters with MTMC's 839th Transportation Battalion, Livorno, Italy, moved equipment to US peacekeeping forces in the Balkans.

The Royal Saudi Naval Forces ship *Abha* offloaded hundreds of pieces of cargo belonging to the 49th Armored Division, Texas Army National Guard, and the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Carson, Colorado. The move made history as the first time a National Guard division took charge of a Bosnian

peacekeeping mission. The 1,200 Guard soldiers who performed the mission comprised the largest Reserve Component force deployed there to date—another record. Such operations validate DOD doctrine and processes and MTMC's readiness to move Army ground units worldwide.

Quality-of-life initiatives. As the largest personal property mover in the United States, MTMC is responsible for many quality-of-life initiatives that affect US military personnel. Annually it moves the personal property of 546,000 military personnel to new assignments around the world. To improve this process, MTMC is in its second year of a reengineering personal property pilot program that is testing new ways to move military personnel at installations in North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida. The MTMC pilot includes such enhancements as in-transit visibility of shipments via a toll-free phone number, full-replacement value for damage or loss, and streamlined administration. About 80 percent of those who have used the pilot say they would use the same mover again. To capitalize on lessons learned, the Office of the Assistant Deputy Secretary of Defense for Transportation Policy is currently developing a full-service moving project.

A second major MTMC initiative is the Global Privately Owned Vehicle Contract, which makes a single contractor responsible for moving 75,000 vehicles worldwide each year. Results are impressive; 99 percent of military personnel and civilians give it excellent ratings. Formerly, as many as four or five private contractors were directly involved in moving a single vehicle. Now, if damage occurs during shipment, responsibility is simplified. In fact, for minor claims, military personnel may receive compensation on the spot.

Defense Travel System. MTMC provides contractual and administrative support for the Defense Travel System. The Arlington, Virginia-based task force is changing the way DOD travels. Soon all military personnel and DOD civilians will have an automated system to handle their temporary duty (TDY) travel. Computers can quickly handle the currently slow, paperwork-intensive steps of travel authorization, reservations and travel claims. Users will use a computer template created in the initial

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A 1st Infantry Division M109A6 howitzer is maneuvered onto a French army heavy-equipment transporter at Thessaloniki, Greece, 1 July 1999.

step of travel authorization through all steps of the TDY process.

Third-party logistics. MTMC is implementing a third-party logistics pilot in Alabama, Florida and Georgia to increase efficiency of domestic freight shipments among DOD installations and the Defense Logistics Agency. Under the pilot, a third-party logistics contractor will handle freight shipments formerly handled by the Installation Transportation Office in the three-state region. A third-party logistics company could begin moving shipments soon.

Management Reform Memorandum 15. MTMC is changing the way it conducts business with customers and vendors. Commercial forms and

streamlined automation will replace government documents. Management Reform Memorandum (MRM) 15, Reengineering Defense Transportation Documentation and Financial Processes, is focusing on this process.⁷

Signed on 7 July 1997 by Under Secretary of Defense John J. Hamre, MRM 15 began a revolution in business practices for DOD transportation services. A major initiative under MRM 15 eliminates government documentation such as bills of lading and military manifests for commercial sealift movement. The US Transportation Command, the designated functional manager for MRM 15, opened a program management office, collocated with MTMC, to spearhead the initiative. Working in

Implementing the PowerTrack

service, an online payment and transaction tracking system for freight shipments, is projected to reduce the payment cycle to carriers from an average of 60 days to three days. The service will be used to pay for commercial transportation of freight within the United States, worldwide express movements and sealift intermodal container service. PowerTrack's single-source information center eliminates reconciliation of freight bills and invoices, and guarantees timely payments.

conjunction with the commercial transportation industry, MTMC has made great strides to adopt transportation industry commercial practices and business processes.

PowerTrack. Another MRM 15 initiative is using the US Bank's PowerTrack service to pay for freight shipments. Implementing the PowerTrack service, an online payment and transaction tracking system, is projected to reduce the payment cycle to carriers from an average of 60 days to three days. The service will be used to pay for commercial transportation of freight within the United States, worldwide express movements and sealift inter-modal container service. PowerTrack's single-source information center provides instant access to shipment data for both carriers and shippers, eliminates reconciliation of freight bills and invoices, and guarantees timely payments.

The PowerTrack solution and MRM 15 are expected to give the Defense Transportation System information superiority. It will provide a fantastic analytical tool to accelerate the move into true distribution management for the entire Defense Transportation System.

Reshaping. MTMC, with the Logistics Management Institute, McLean, Virginia, is reshaping to more closely resemble private enterprise transportation organizations. The future organization will be smaller, faster and more efficient in its work. Automation and organizational structuring will

create savings that will reduce freight rates for MTMC's DOD customers. The reshaping includes centralized work processes at headquarters and standardized staffs at the command's 24 worldwide port units. Some work processes will shift to the Deployment Support Command—MTMC's operations element. A plan is underway to centralize MTMC's resource management, personnel and logistics functions, currently at MTMC's subordinate headquarters and ports, within the headquarters element.

Other changes are taking place at MTMC's two major overseas commands—the 598th and the 599th Transportation Groups. After years of unsynchronized, incremental changes, the two organizations are distinctly different in staffing and organization, but in the future they will resemble each other. A team of four MTMC battalion commanders reviewed the staffing of MTMC's battalions. The strength disparity among the units ranges from 18 in Bahrain to 100 in Korea. The goal is to develop a common structure for battalions, adapted to meet the needs of each battalion's area of responsibility and mission. The future shape of MTMC is still taking form, but it will be smaller in size and its operating functions will resemble commercial transportation firms. These modifications will be implemented during Fiscal Year 2001, but MTMC's mission, energy and enthusiasm will continue unchanged. *MR*

NOTES

1. A single measurement ton is equivalent to a loaded pallet.
2. From a MTMC meeting planning logistics movement to Kosovo held in the spring of 1999.
3. The USS *Osprey* has a waterline length of 188 feet and a waterline beam of 38 feet.
4. The *ZERLIPOULLI* is an Albanian newspaper, and this excerpt was taken from the May 1999 issue. The MTMC commander obtained it during an inspection visit.

5. Ibid.
6. Speech by Major General Kenneth L. Privratsky at an employee town hall meeting (spring 2000).
7. Department of Defense, Management Reform Memorandum, "Reengineering Defense Transportation Documentation and Financial Processes" (Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 7 July 1997).

Lieutenant Colonel John R. Randt, US Army National Guard, Retired, is the command affairs officer for the Military Traffic Management Command, Alexandria, Virginia. He received a B.S. from the University of Tennessee and an M.A. from Ball State University. He is a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College and the Army Management Staff College. He has served in a variety of command and staff positions in the Continental United States, Vietnam, Italy, Panama, Guatemala and the Persian Gulf, including inspections analyst, US Army Inspector General, Washington, DC; deputy public affairs officer, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana; and deputy commander, US Army Reserve Video Team, Dammon, Saudi Arabia.